

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

National Resources & Science – Center for Urban Ecology

4598 MacArthur Blvd., N.W.

Washington, DC 20007

(NCR-RNR)

June 16, 2003

Gail L. Carter
Project Scientist
TAMS Consultants, Inc.
675 N Washington St, Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Ms. Carter:

We received your letter of June 5, 2003, requesting information regarding District of Columbia – rare, threatened, and endangered species in the vicinity of the Kennedy Center Access Improvement Study Area indicated on the attached maps you provided. The District of Columbia Natural Heritage Program has no records of rare, threatened or endangered species within the site described above.

However, the following species were recorded near the study area described above and are listed in the format of “scientific name – common name (date of last recorded observation)”: *Alasmidonta undulata* - triangle floater (no date listed), *Lampsilis cariosa* – yellow lampmussel (no date listed), *Sida hermaphrodita* - Virginia mallow (1899), *Cyperus lancastricensis* – Lancater’s umbrella sedge (1900), *Siren lacertian* – greater siren (pre-1902), *Fundulus luciae* – spotfin killifish (1911), *Pelastoneurus comatus* – a fly (1991), *Pelastoneurus potomacus* – a fly (1991), *Carex tetanica* – rigid sedge (1995), *Erythronium albidum* – white trout-lily (1995), and *Cerastium arvense* – field chickweed (1998).

We recommend that you contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which has Federal oversight for rare, threatened and endangered species. We also recommend that you contact the following National Park Service personnel: the Associate Regional Director for Lands, Resources and Planning and the Superintendents of Rock Creek Park, National Capital Parks – Central, and George Washington Memorial Parkway for additional information regarding National Park Service property in this area.

If you have any questions, or need further assistance, please contact me at 202-342-1443 Ext. 230.

Sincerely,

Dr. Christina Wright
Data Manager, National Park Service
Interim Coordinator, DC Natural Heritage Program

cc: Associate Regional Director for Lands, Resources and Planning: John Parsons
Superintendent, Rock Creek Park: Adrienne Coleman
Superintendent, National Capital Parks – Central: Arnold Goldstein
Superintendent, George Washington Memorial Parkway: Audrey Calhoun

June 5, 2003

National Park Service
Center for Urban Ecology
4598 MacArthur Boulevard
Washington, D.C. NW 20007
Attn: Christina Wright

Subject: Kennedy Center Access Improvements Project Environmental Assessment

Dear Ms. Wright:

TAMS Consultants, Inc. (an Earth Tech company) is preparing an environmental assessment (EA) for the Federal Highway Administration (in cooperation with the Kennedy Center, the National Park Service, the National Capital Planning Commission, and the District of Columbia Department of Transportation) for the above-referenced project. This project will increase traffic, pedestrian, and bicycle access to the Kennedy Center and provide a setting in keeping with the Kennedy Center's designation as a presidential memorial and its location in the Monumental Core. telephone 549.8728
Facsimile 703.549.9134

This letter is to request information from your agency as to the location of any threatened and endangered species that may utilize habitats within or near the locations described below.

A map of the study area is included. The proposed urban design improvement projects would be located adjacent to the Kennedy Center on the east and west sides of the building. Roadway improvements would occur in three areas: the vicinity of the Whitehurst Freeway in the northern part of the study area, at the intersection of Ohio Drive and the Potomac Freeway (I-66) in the southern end of the study area, and at E Street and at the eastern end of the study area at E Street and Virginia Avenue. These roadway improvements would occur in areas already in use for roads, and would stay within existing rights-of-way for the most part. We are coordinating small land takings from the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway and West Potomac Park with the National Park Service. These takings would be adjacent to existing roadways. No new crossing of Rock Creek Park would be required. Some landscaped lawn, trees and shrubs would be removed, but several new acres of green space would be created by the plaza.

The project would include the construction of:

- A new several-acre, landscaped Kennedy Center Plaza decking over the Potomac Freeway and the E Street Expressway, east of the Center. The plaza would form the intersection of E street with 25th Street and would afford a stately approach to the Center from the east. The plaza could provide space for two new buildings planned by the Kennedy



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Center but not part of this project, and between them, a large public square.

- A grand open stairway to link the Kennedy Center west terrace to the riverfront promenade. This would restore an important element of the original design for the Center and facilitate pedestrian, bicycle, and boat access.
- A boat dock on the Potomac River west of the Center to allow water taxis and other boats to tie up, as envisioned in the National Capital Planning Commission's *Extending the Legacy* plan. We have held a coordination meeting with the US Army Corps of Engineers, but design of the dock would not begin until after the environmental assessment is completed. The Corps recommended a floating dock. When the dock is designed, FHWA will prepare permits and any further environmental documentation required, based on the design.
- E Street extended westward. This would link the Center to President's Park and the core of the city. Through traffic would continue to use the E Street Expressway, below the plaza deck.
- New direct connections between the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway and the Potomac Freeway in the vicinity of K Street/Whitehurst Freeway. This would make the freeway more useful and more attractive to motorists, thus diverting traffic from the parkway onto the freeway.
- Within West Potomac Park, an improved intersection of Ohio Drive with the Potomac Freeway and the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway that would increase safety and relieve congestion.
- Parking below the deck. Up to 500 parking spaces could be created below the deck, better serving the needs of the Kennedy Center and of the new buildings proposed for the plaza area.

While not included in this project, the construction of the plaza east of the Kennedy Center would facilitate construction of two new buildings planned by the Kennedy Center to house an education center, administrative offices, and opera rehearsal space. These buildings would be built on air rights over the Potomac Freeway and E Street Expressway.

The enclosed maps show the location of the proposed construction projects.

National Park Service

June 5, 2003

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at (703) 706-0530 or Penny Douglas at (703) 706-0117. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Gail L. Carter
Project Scientist I

Enclosure:
Location Map



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Base Study Area



- Landmarks
- Study Area Boundary
- - - Sectors within Study Area
- Open Space and Parkland

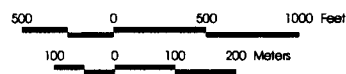


Figure 1-3



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Chesapeake Bay Field Office
177 Admiral Cochrane Drive
Annapolis, MD 21401



July 9, 2003

Ms. Gail L. Carter
Earth Tech
675 North Washington Street, Suite 300
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

*RE: Kennedy Center Access Improvements Project Environmental Assessment,
Washington, District of Columbia*

Dear Ms. Carter:

This responds to your letter, received June 10, 2003, requesting information on the presence of species which are federally listed or proposed for listing as endangered or threatened in the above referenced project area. We have reviewed the information you enclosed and are providing comments in accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Except for occasional transient individuals, no proposed or federally listed endangered or threatened species are known to exist within the project impact area. Therefore, no Biological Assessment or further Section 7 consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is required. Should project plans change, or should additional information on the distribution of listed or proposed species become available, this determination may be reconsidered.

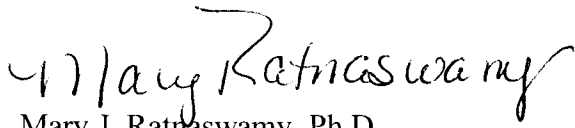
This response relates only to federally protected threatened or endangered species under our jurisdiction. Limited information is currently available regarding the distribution of other rare species in the District of Columbia. However, the Nature Conservancy and National Park Service (NPS) have initiated an inventory of rare species within the District. For further information on such rare species, you should contact Christina Wright of the DC Natural Heritage Program at (202) 342-1443 ext. 230.

An additional concern of the Service is wetlands protection. Federal and state partners of the Chesapeake Bay Program have adopted an interim goal of no overall net loss of the Basin's remaining wetlands, and the long term goal of increasing the quality and quantity of the Basin's wetlands resource base. Because of this policy and the functions and values wetlands perform, the Service recommends avoiding wetland impacts. All wetlands within the project area should be identified, and if alterations of wetlands is proposed, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

Baltimore District, should be contacted for permit requirements. They can be reached at (410) 962-3670.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide information relative to fish and wildlife issues, and thank you for your interests in these resources. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact Maricela Constantino at (410) 573-4542.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Ratnaswamy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary J. Ratnaswamy, Ph.D.

Program Supervisor, Threatened and Endangered Species

June 5, 2003

US Fish and Wildlife Service
Chesapeake Bay Office
177 Admiral Cochran Drive
Annapolis, MD 21401
Attn: Maricela Constantino

Subject: Kennedy Center Access Improvements Project Environmental Assessment

Dear Ms. Constantino:

TAMS Consultants, Inc. (an Earth Tech company) is preparing an environmental assessment (EA) for the Federal Highway Administration (in cooperation with the Kennedy Center, the National Park Service, the National Capital Planning Commission, and the District of Columbia Department of Transportation) for the above-referenced project. This project will increase traffic, pedestrian, and bicycle access to the Kennedy Center and provide a setting in keeping with the Kennedy Center's designation as a presidential memorial and its location in the Monumental Core.

This letter is to request information from your agency as to the location of any threatened and endangered species that may utilize habitats within or near the locations described below.

A map of the study area is included. The proposed urban design improvement projects would be located adjacent to the Kennedy Center on the east and west sides of the building. Roadway improvements would occur in three areas: the vicinity of the Whitehurst Freeway in the northern part of the study area, at the intersection of Ohio Drive and the Potomac Freeway (I-66) in the southern end of the study area, and at E Street and at the eastern end of the study area at E Street and Virginia Avenue. These roadway improvements would occur in areas already in use for roads, and would stay within existing rights-of-way for the most part. We are coordinating small land takings from the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway and West Potomac Park with the National Park Service. These takings would be adjacent to existing roadways. No new crossing of Rock Creek Park would be required. Some landscaped lawn, trees and shrubs would be removed, but several new acres of green space would be created by the plaza.

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Center but not part of this project, and between them, a large public square.

- A grand open stairway to link the Kennedy Center west terrace to the riverfront promenade. This would restore an important element of the original design for the Center and facilitate pedestrian, bicycle, and boat access.
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While not included in this project, the construction of the plaza east of the Kennedy Center would facilitate construction of two new buildings planned by the Kennedy Center to house an education center, administrative offices, and opera rehearsal space. These buildings would be built on air rights over the Potomac Freeway and E Street Expressway.

The enclosed maps show the location of the proposed construction projects.

U.S. Fish And Wildlife
June 5, 2003

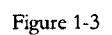
If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at (703) 706-0530 or Penny Douglas at (703) 706-0117. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Gail L. Carter
Project Scientist I

Enclosure:
Location Map

Base Study Area





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
NORTHEAST REGION
One Blackburn Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2298

JUL 25 2003

Janet O'Neill
Senior Project Manager
Earth Tech
675 North Washington Street
Suite 300
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Re: Environmental Assessment, Kennedy Center Access Improvements, Washington DC

Dear Ms O'Neill:

This responds to your letter dated July 21, 2003, requesting information on the presence of any federally listed threatened or endangered species and/or designated critical habitat for listed species in the Potomac River. The proposed project involves improving pedestrian, bicycle, motorized vehicle, transit, and water transport access to the Kennedy Center as well as creating an urban design setting for the Kennedy Center that emphasizes re-connection of the Kennedy Center southeast to the National Mall and east to the White House and downtown. The proposed project involves the construction of a pedestrian link between the Kennedy Center and the Potomac River to facilitate water transport as a means of access to the Center.

The only listed species under the jurisdiction of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) that is known to be present in the vicinity of the project area is the shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*). The NOAA Fisheries recovery plan (1998) indicates that shortnose sturgeon found in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries (including the Potomac River) are considered part of the Chesapeake Bay distinct population segment (DPS). Welsh et al. (1999) summarizes historical and recent evidence of shortnose sturgeon presence in the Chesapeake Bay. The first published account of shortnose sturgeon in the Chesapeake system was an 1876 record from the Potomac River reported in a general list of fishes of Maryland (Uhler and Lugger 1876). Other historical records of shortnose sturgeon in the Chesapeake include: the Potomac River (Smith and Bean 1899), the upper Bay near the mouth of the Susquehanna River in the early 1980's, and the lower Bay near the mouths of the James and Rappahannock rivers in the late 1970's (Dadswell et al. 1984).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Reward Program for Atlantic Sturgeon began in 1996. Shortnose sturgeon have been incidentally captured via this program as well. As of July 2002, 50 shortnose sturgeon were captured via the reward program in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries – four from the lower Susquehanna River, two in the Bohemia River, six in the Potomac River, two south of the Bay Bridge near Kent Island, one near Howell Point, one just



north of Hoopers Island, one in the Elk River and two in Fishing Bay. The remaining shortnose sturgeon were captured in the upper Bay north of Hart-Miller Island. These fish were captured alive in either commercial gillnets, poundnets, fykenets, eel pots, hoop nets, or catfish traps. The six shortnose sturgeon captured in the Potomac River were documented in the following locations: two at the mouth of the river near Ophelia, Virginia (May 3, 2000 and March 26, 2001); one at the mouth of the Saint Mary's River (April 21, 1998); and three at the mouth of the Potomac Creek (May 17, 1996 and March 8, 2002).

Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) states that each Federal agency shall, in consultation with the Secretary, insure that any action they authorize, fund, or carry out is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat. Because federally listed shortnose sturgeon may be present in this area, any discretionary federal action that may affect this species must undergo Section 7 consultation.

Your letter indicated that multiple alternatives for improved access to the Potomac River are being examined. When project plans are fully developed, the federal action agency (Federal Highway Administration) will be responsible for initiating Section 7 consultation, at which time the project details should be submitted to the NOAA Fisheries Northeast Regional Office along with an assessment of the project's impacts to shortnose sturgeon. After reviewing this information, NOAA Fisheries would then be able to conduct a consultation under Section 7 of the ESA. If you have any questions or concerns about these comments or about the consultation process in general, please contact Julie Crocker of my staff at (978) 281-9328 ext. 6530.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mary A. Colligan".

Mary A. Colligan
Assistant Regional Administrator
for Protected Resources

July 21, 2003

Ms. Patricia Kurkul, Regional Administrator
National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Region
One Blackburn Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2298

Subject: Environmental Assessment, Kennedy Center Access Improvements,
Washington, DC

Dear Ms. Kurkul:

Telephone

703.549.8728

Facsimile

703.549.9134

The Federal Highway Administration, in partnership with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the District of Columbia Department of Transportation, the National Park Service, the National Capital Planning Commission, and the Commission of Fine Arts, is proposing to improve access to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC. The proposed action would include both transportation and urban design improvements. We are assisting the FHWA in the preparation of the environmental assessment for the proposed action.

The proposed action would improve pedestrian, bicycle, motorized vehicle, transit, and water transport access to the Kennedy Center as well as create an urban design setting for the Kennedy Center that emphasizes re-connection of the Kennedy Center southeast to the National Mall and east to the White House and downtown.

The EA evaluates a number of alternatives, but one critical part of each of the two designs considered to be reasonable include provision of a pedestrian link between the Kennedy Center and the Potomac River, to facilitate water transport as a means of access to the Center. The link would include structures in the Potomac River. The enclosed figures show the two alternative designs being considered to provide this link. (The Bowed Stairs is the preferred alternative.) These designs are described in more detail in the enclosed text. Construction of these structures is the only work proposed within the Potomac River, as the project is currently envisioned.

As part of the EA process, we request a current list of of the federally listed threatened, endangered, and candidate species that are known to occur within or in the vicinity of the proposed project area.

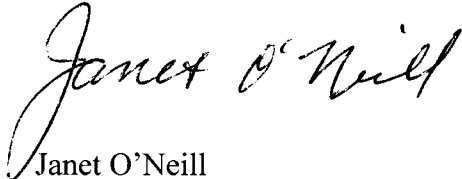


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For further information, please contact me at 703-706-0131 or Penny Douglas at 703-706-0117.

Thank-you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,



Janet O'Neill
Senior Project Director

Telephone

703.549.8728

Facsimile

703.549.9134



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KENNEDY CENTER ACCESS STUDY PEDESTRIAN LINK TO THE POTOMAC RIVER

Alternative S1, Bowed Stairs

The Kennedy Center River Terrace cantilevers over the northbound lanes of the Rock Creek Parkway (Figure 2-6, Alternative Stairs, illustrates this concept). Alternative 1 proposes two small terraces to extend over the southbound lanes of the parkway to a platform for elevator and stair access to the Potomac River promenade below.

The Potomac River promenade would bow out slightly on a pier-supported wharf structure extending over the Potomac River out from the existing stone bulkhead. Elevators from the River Terrace extensions would connect to the promenade below. An alternative upper promenade could potentially run adjacent to the southbound lanes of the Rock Creek Parkway if desired. Stairs from the River Terrace extensions would connect to the new lower promenade running adjacent to the river. The stairs would bow slightly out to the water along a gracious curve that would parallel the curve of the proposed pier structure edge. Bowing the stairs away from the parkway and toward the river will make the stairs to the river less of a visual obstruction to motorists traveling along the parkway.

From the promenade along the edge of the pier structure would be a landing and ramp system leading to a floating dock, providing the opportunity for patrons to arrive at the Kennedy Center via water taxi or tour boats.

Alternative S2, Monumental Stairs

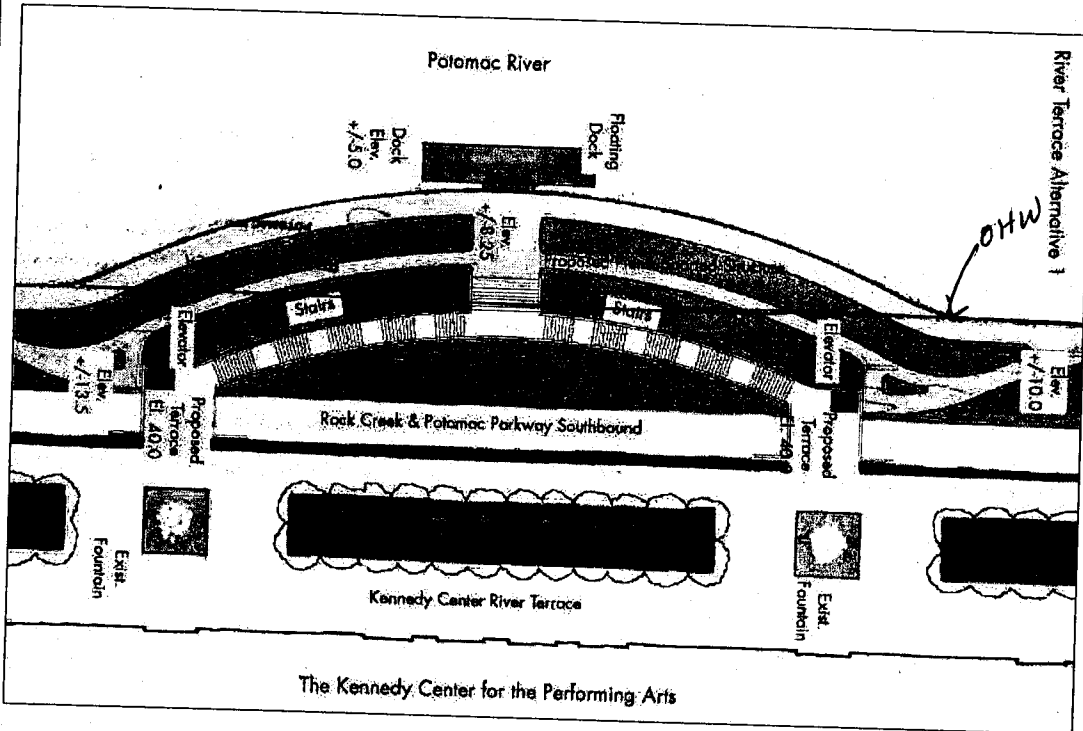
To provide connections to the Potomac River promenade, Alternative 2 proposes three terraces to extend over the southbound lanes of the Rock Creek Parkway to a platform for elevator and stair access to the promenade below (Figure 2-6, Alternative Stairs, illustrates this concept).

A grand staircase would extend from the central terrace over the parkway and down to the Potomac River promenade. Two narrow terraces leading to elevators providing access to the parkway and promenade would flank the central terrace and staircase. Similar to Alternative 1, an option could include an upper promenade run adjacent to the southbound lanes of the parkway if desired. To accommodate the grand staircase, the Potomac River promenade would have a pier-supported structure, approximately 25 feet wide and 300 feet long, extending over the Potomac River and out from the existing stone bulkhead.

As with Alternative 1, a platform and ramp system leading to a floating dock extending from the Potomac River promenade would provide the opportunity for patrons to arrive at the Kennedy Center via water taxi or tour boat.

Stair Alternatives

Bowed Stairs



Monumental Stairs

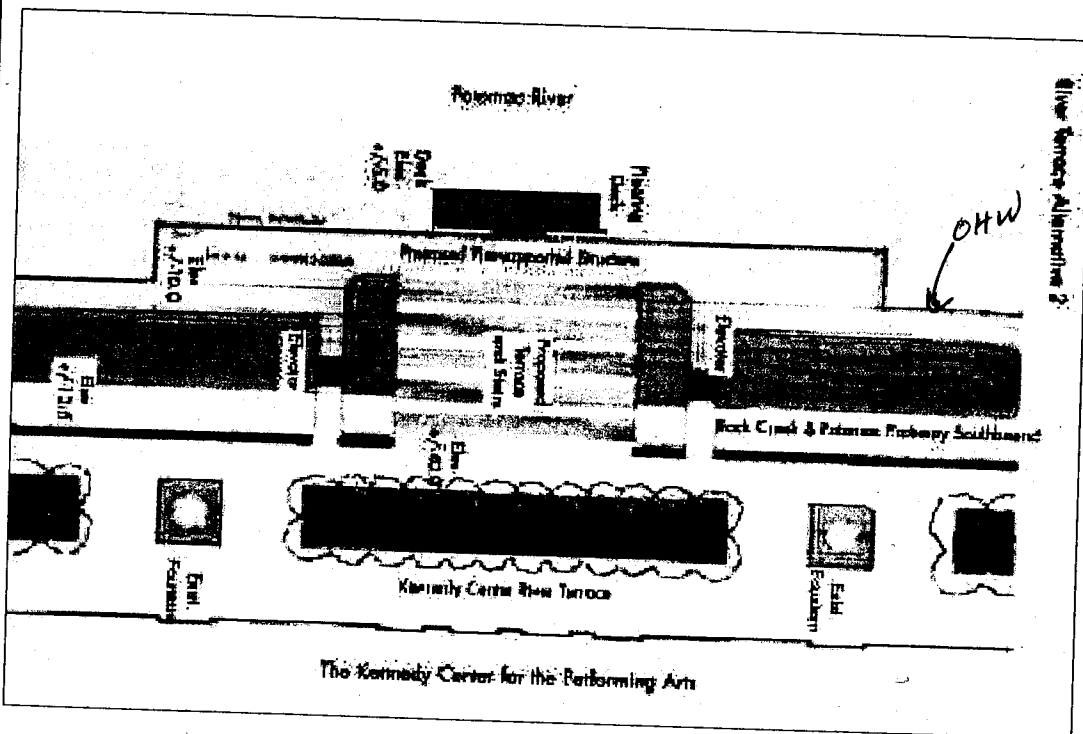
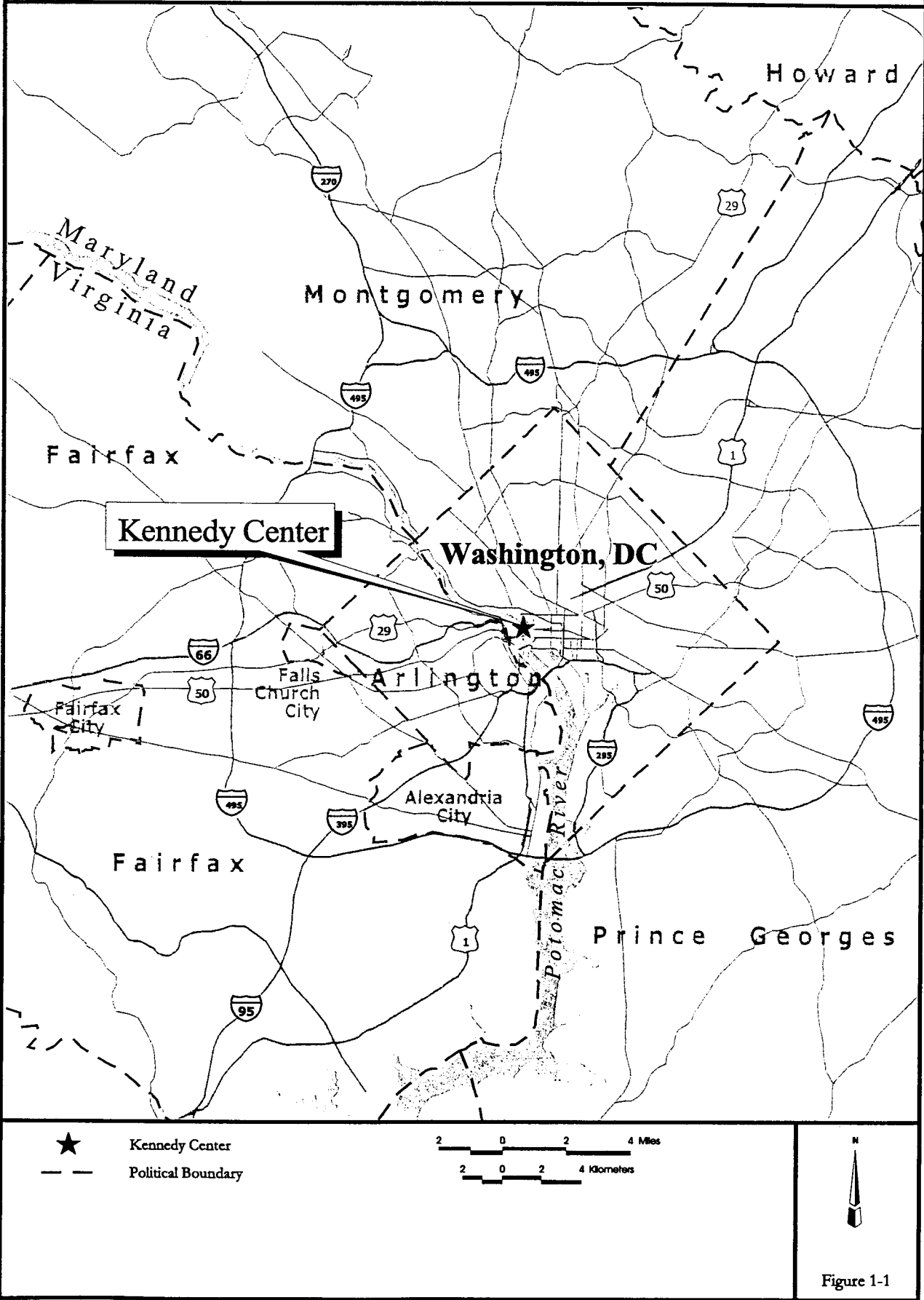


Figure 2-6

Location of the Kennedy Center



The Kennedy Center and Environs

